

Tribal Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) Meeting

Green Bay, WI

Jan 28-29th

Both the Tribal Leader roundtable and the meeting on Tuesday left me questioning where Tribal governments lie in the grand scheme of 8(a) contracting. Tribal Leaders are questioning the entire process. It was stated that only 1/3 of tribes/small businesses are obtaining these contracts. Many tribes/businesses are lost during the application process, the length of the application and the time that is needed for them to be approved are standing in the way of many of us obtaining these contracts. We are a government with a government to government relationship with the United States, and that should be taken with more seriousness when consideration for these contracts. As it stands now, the hierarchy of competition is Federal Government, state, local municipalities and then Tribal Governments. That needs to change.

Many representatives from the Federal agencies in attendance were stating how great of an opportunity it is in gaining business with the Federal Government, however, it was stressed how hard it is to wade through the paper work. Several of the speakers made note that this was their first time speaking and addressing the Native Community. If we truly had a government to government relationship, we would be further advanced within the system. I also think that these Federal agencies need to make it a priority to have a liaison that is charged with keeping communications with tribes an easy process.

I am not saying that we shouldn't be looking towards this avenue, but that we should be taking a serious look in to some of the options available to us as a Tribe. Much discussion was on SBA's Mentor Protégé Program, joint ventures and partnerships.

There are many avenues for assistance in obtaining contracts, obtaining SBA certification and marketing. This can all be overwhelming to one/Tribe that has little experience in running a business or pursuing Federal contracts. But if used properly and extensively, it can prove to be very beneficial to your business avenues.

I had many discussions with other Tribal leaders about where we go from here. We all sit around and talk about the endless possibilities, but when we go back home to our Tribe, we all get caught up in the day to day things of being a leader.

Below are the notes that I was able to take during the Leadership Roundtable on Jan 28th, and also the all day workshop on Jan. 29th. Thank you to the Tribal Council for allowing me to travel and be a part of the discussion taking place at the PTAC meeting this winter as we continue to look down the road of 8(a) contracting.

The discussion started with an introduction of Marianne O'Brien Markowits and Eric Ness, both from Small Business Association, SBA.

E200 Program is a 6 week training program for tribal programs. Classes focus on financing to marketing to setting up websites. 13 classes that meet every other week. SBA also pays tuition to the businesses that have been in business for more than 3 years and that have reached a specific amount of revenue.

Wisconsin is the only E200 program east of the Mississippi. They discussed the possibility of doing virtual classes but they also only meet in Milwaukee twice. They were trying to get at least four businesses to do it thru the internet.

Questions:

- What is the benefit of taking these trainings and becoming a graduate of it?

Answer:

- 26 meetings and 13 training sessions, Case study, facilitated discussion.
- Graduates have started their own business and have sold them.
- Jeff Johnson, graduate, says that you will build a faster business.
- Classes on running and starting your business. SBA brings in investors and financiers so that you can get used to what they may be asking when businesses start asking for money to start.
- CEO mentoring group.
- Concern of tribal leadership not having their backs or true support at home. When leadership changes, it puts up roadblocks in that business to continue with that support.
- Sovereign immunity issue gets brought up again. Discussion that we need to or the E200 program needs to educate non-Native businesses so they can be comfortable working and doing bus with a Native owned company.

The 2nd phase of the E200 program is the continuation of the progress, how to sustain the progress of that business and helps with the action plan.

Ann Kalayil, Region 5 GSA, Governmental Services Administration

They are in acquisition, set up vendors for small business to do business with the government. They are the preferred agency that works with the Federal government. They do outreach work and presentations as a "how to" for purchasing from the Government.

Carr spoke on the hierarchy of the pecking order in which GSA works with Government and municipalities. It is the Tribes then everyone else that should be considered when working with the Government. Historically, tribes have fallen towards the bottom of the list when getting contracts and such.

Tuesday Jan 29

Opening remarks by Ada Deer

Eric Ness (SBA)

Update on Federal Small Bus Programs:

- E200 program is under the SBA
- Federal contracting is a win/win partnership
- 23% is the goal for Small business contracts for 2013, 5% for 8(a)
- 10.7 billion dollars have been awarded thru contracts to Native owned businesses and tribes.
- RFP E-Z is a new website to keep up to date on current available contracts.
- New Tax Incentives for hiring enrolled members of tribe
- Wages up to 20k can be used per employee per tax year.
- 7(a) Loan Program: 5-10 year working capital, machinery and equipment, up to 25 years for real estate and construction.
- CAPLineS of Credit in order to keep the contract viable thru funding.
- Much information was given on the loan program and how it is in place to get small businesses on line in obtaining fed contracts.

Federal Government wants to do more export loans, to encourage in creating more businesses in exporting.

Surety bonds changes, surety bonds were raised from 2 to 6.5 million
Entrepreneurial Training to take place at LTBB and Little River

Ann Kalayil, Regional Administrator, GSA Governmental Services
Administration

Once SBA certified, you can go to them to start doing business. Mission, is to deliver the best value in real estate, acquisition, and technology services to governmental agencies.

11 regions headquartered in DC. In order to be more transparent they have done over 150 personal visits in order to reach out, this is her first Native based group visit.

They are responsible for procuring space (PBS) needed to run human services within the fed govt. And thru FAS, they also sell material from a pencil to power/energy. They work with an SBA and will explain to them how to get on to a schedule to do business.

USAspending.gov is a great website to see where the Government is spending their money.

Mariana Pardo, director of HUBZone Program

All tribal lands are HUBZones

She skyped in and there were tech difficulties.

All the PowerPoint presentations will be available on faccptac.com

Goal is to increase employment and stimulate the economy

Question answer period with Mentor panel

What is most impressive about a small business when meeting them?

That they have done a lot of their own homework, know the Federal terms when speaking about contracting as it shows that they know what they are doing. Turnoff: walking in with entitlement. Don't walk in there and act like they owe you something.

You need to have a qualified statement, which will force them to take a look at your proposal.

Comment on the mentor protégé program?

The most stellar program is the SBA mentor protégé program, joint venture. Is it sanctioned or not, single contract or for a new entity for multiple contracts. Many things can be achieved through partnering with others.

Joint ventures: Partnering with others that can do things in your contract that you may not have enough experience in.

Comment by audience member about the lengthy time process of

contracting:

Speaker said that there is a way online to follow up with the advancement of the proposal.

Advice was given when applying for contracting,

Have your application, make sure it's clear and concise and to the point. Be clear on what it is you want to do and who you want to do it for.

Make sure you are out there and networking

Make sure you make the point that it is a win/win partnership between you, your company and the Government.

Selling to Federal Government

More panelists telling small business advice on how to apply for a Federal contract.

Break out session "Growing your business with Federal Government"

Robert Giesfeldt, Lead Business Opportunities Specialist, US SBA

The most important thing I can tell you is "don't give up"

Take advantage of what is available for small businesses.

Always read the solicitation -- know what it says. A lot of people don't read the solicitations and end up trying to sell us something we don't need.

A run through of how the SBA assists small businesses in obtaining contracts. Stressing small businesses needs to do their homework first. They covered many myths and realities in doing business with the Feds

- Prompt payment act
- SBA Hands on assistance
- SAM System for Award Management (combines 8 fed procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into the new system) Allows for a search for small businesses within the country.
- Dynamic Small Businesses Search. Quick Market Search.